

Solutions to Global Warming – America Leads the Way

Dr James Hansen of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Science has said, **“We have at the most ten years—not ten years to decide upon action, but ten years to fundamentally alter the trajectory of global greenhouse emissions.”**

The majority of Americans agree that global warming is a growing problem and agree with

Dr. Hansen's sense of urgency. **It's a problem we can solve!** It will take a mix of solutions to meet our energy needs and to cut the amount of carbon we're putting in the air. If we approach global warming with a single, intense focus of resources and talent, with investment in research and development and technological breakthroughs, and with rapid advances becoming the norm, we can reach the necessary goal of an 80 % reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050.

If we move away from fossil fuels toward a highly efficient economy based on sustainable, renewable sources and if America leads the way, we can reach that goal worldwide. Long-term carbon reductions necessary to stop the current cycle of Global Warming must also be embraced and enacted by individual citizens as well as by local and national decision-makers.

Skeptics may say, why bother reducing emissions when China and India can negate any gain as they build more coal-fired power plants? If America and its citizens lead, setting an example of energy efficiency and conservation while developing new technologies, we can make it more likely that developing nations will leapfrog over the fossil-fuel-based industrial model into an energy system based on renewables.

Maine is leading the way and setting an example. The state's Climate Action Plan has set the stage for emission reduction goals. Nine cities and towns in Maine, most recently Falmouth, have signed the US Mayors Climate Protection agreement that encourages cities and towns to reduce their emissions 7 % lower than 1990 levels by 2012. Over 515 towns and cities across the country have signed this agreement, proving that global warming is not a partisan issue and can be solved one city at a time through grassroots action.

What you can do personally - Make a personal pledge to reduce your carbon emissions by 2% a year for the next 40 years.

- Take measures toward energy efficiency in your home: use compact fluorescents, buy energy efficient appliances, turn the thermostat warmer in the summer to use less electricity for air conditioning, etc
- Drive a more fuel-efficient vehicle, don't idle your vehicle, drive more efficiently, car pool, make sure your tires are properly inflated, or utilize public transportation.
- Support renewable energy. Look into tax credits that support the installation of solar panels on your home—allowing you to supply all of your own

electricity and even sell back excess at peak times. Explore buying electricity generated from renewable sources.

- Urge your employer to increase their conservation and energy efficiency measures and to support renewable energy.
- Urge your mayor or town council to sign the Cool Communities/Cities pledge (see www.coolcities.us).

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